

ABLE ACT 2014
Bill # 6738
Testimony of Zeb Olko

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Zeb Olko. I am testifying today as the CT Ambassador for the National Down Syndrome Society, NDSS and all people in CT with Down syndrome. NDSS is the leading national advocacy organization supporting people with Down syndrome. It was one of the lead organizations in creating and passing the ABLE ACT. I lobbied for the ABLE ACT on Capitol Hill in 2013 with the assistance of NDSS and my life coach, Dr. Judy Itzkowitz.. We met with Senator Richard Blumenthal, who I had the opportunity to intern for on Capitol Hill, Congressman Joe Courtney and Senator John Larson. They voted in favor of the Bill and it was passed on December 16, my birthday! President Obama signed the Bill into law on December 19.

The ABLE ACT is important to others and me with Down syndrome because it will allow us an opportunity to live our lives better. Families cannot open college savings funds without the risk of losing government assistance. I wanted to go to college but my family was told not to put any money away. I did attend George Mason University, which was a major financial hardship. We cannot save any monies over \$2000.00. There is no way to save for a car, house, apartment deposit, education, medical, retirement or an individual need. The rules prevent us from having a better life. Having a disability does come with additional costs. The ABLE ACT will help families save and avoid having to rely solely on government assistance.

I urge you to please pass Bill # 6738 TODAY!

Thank you

Zeb Olko
Enfield